



FAFSA Action Plan

While the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is undergoing a simplification process effective 2023 for the 2024-2025 academic year, steps must be taken to ensure a positive student experience. Institutions of higher education must be prepared to support new and current students who will experience delays and possibly confusion related to a new and different FAFSA process. Data indicates that a high school senior who completes the FAFSA is 84% more likely to enroll in postsecondary education, and 90% of high school seniors who complete the FAFSA immediately enroll in postsecondary education programs. For current college students, year-to-year FAFSA completion is associated with higher persistence rates, with the effects more significant among lower-income, Pell-eligible college students.

As such, it is critical to analyze current institutional systems, identify areas for growth, and enhance processes to ensure incoming and current students have the most accurate and up-to-date resources and support as they complete their FAFSA. With your action plan, you will: create completion goals and monitor them regularly, build shared ownership, establish partnerships, and spread awareness. The following strategies have been collected to support the aforementioned steps.

SET GOALS

Identify barriers to FAFSA completion at your institution. Consider the experiences of both incoming students and current students. List all barriers you can identify; add more boxes as needed. **Keep barriers in mind throughout your planning process; they should be addressed in your Action Plan.**

Barriers to FAFSA Completion <i>(One barrier per box; you may add more)</i>	Why? <i>(Type of barrier – highlight all that apply)</i>
	<i>Systems * Fiscal Resources * Human Capital Resources * Training/Support * Buy-In * Data Availability * Change Resistance * Leadership</i>
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GOAL(S) FOR FAFSA COMPLETION

For institutions of higher education, consider what data you have from previous years on total FAFSA completion for incoming and current students. Are there differences between FTIAC student completion rates and transfer student completion rates? Create goals for your general institutional population or any specific priority population you think appropriate. Are there ways your institution can package financial aid to students earlier? Consider creating a point-in-time increase to total package goals. Example below.

- Current student FAFSA completion percentage 2022: _____
- Current student completion percentage 2023: _____
 - If you had an increase, what contributed to this change? What worked?
 - If you had a decrease, what contributed to this change?
- Total # of undergraduate students _____
 - Goal 1: FAFSA completion goal for 2024: (% completion) _____ **by March 1**
 - Goal 2: FAFSA completion goal for 2024: (% completion) _____ **by June 30**

REFLECTION AND PLANNING

- What feedback have you received, if any, about areas of improvement you can do to increase student FAFSA completion? *(i.e. parent and supporter engagement, new and current student communication, capacity, understanding of FAFSA language, etc.)*

- In what ways have you communicated, or do you plan to communicate FAFSA simplification changes to current students, parents, and supporters?

- What system(s) do you currently have in place to monitor which students have or have not completed the FAFSA?
 - Who has access to this information?
 - How often is the information utilized to set up meetings with students/families and monitor progress?
 - Within your system, what ways do you engage students and their families about their FAFSA completion?
 - If so, how are they able to access this information? Or how are you sharing this information with them?

- Who are the team members to support the FAFSA completion effort?

- Who is the team lead?

- How often will the team meet to discuss progress?

PLANNING FOR ACTIONABLE NEXT STEPS

Use the [FAFSA Completion Strategies](#) document as you begin to create your actionable next steps to increase FAFSA completion. The steps listed are suggested but they can be adjusted or removed if not applicable to your institution.

FAFSA Completion Strategies	Probing questions	What actionable steps will be taken?
<i>Set a bold goal and monitor progress</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How are you currently tracking FAFSA completion data? ▪ Who is monitoring this system? ▪ Are there other data indicators you think are important to track that should be included? ▪ Who are you sharing your data with and how? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a meeting cadence for all team members. ▪ Create an internal data tracking system to monitor interactions and completion. ▪ Ensure that the Data Use Agreement has been filed for SY23-24.
<i>Spread awareness and provide individualized support for both new and current students</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How are you currently spreading awareness of FAFSA and Michigan Achievement Scholarship? ▪ How are you informing student support professionals across various institutional departments of FAFSA changes? ▪ Who is not receiving information? Why? ▪ Are there any institutional or community partners you can work with to strengthen your communication? ▪ What strategies can you include to increase student and family buy-in? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a checklist/timeline of expectations for both incoming and current students. ▪ Utilize resources from the Resource Hub and getmimoney.org. ▪ Schedule after-hours support. ▪ Use student success professional to support completion. ▪ Send targeted mailings, texts, newsletters to families (target home languages when applicable). ▪ Provide information during classes and events on campus or use registered student organizations to share information.
<i>Expand capacity and dedicated support</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who should be included on the team to support completion? ▪ Are there internal partners you should include? (i.e., academic advisors, admissions, recruiters, faculty, success coaches)? ▪ Are there trusted professionals in your community that can support FAFSA completion? ▪ Is everyone trained to support these efforts? ▪ What resources are provided to support these individuals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine a FAFSA Champion/team lead. ▪ Establish a meeting cadence for all team members. ▪ Provide training opportunities for the team. ▪ Hire dedicated staff or provide funds/stipends for additional hours. ▪ Identify student caseloads for staff support.

FAFSA Completion Strategies	Probing questions	What actionable steps will be taken?
<i>Establish college-going culture, building relationships with community or other colleges</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In what ways are you engaging local high schools or partner institutions to support FAFSA completion? ▪ To what extent do you assist all students- in all grade levels- engage in postsecondary exploration? ▪ To what extent do students have exposure to college campuses or career industries? ▪ Where do students hear, see and discuss postsecondary plans? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage in College Cash Campaign. ▪ Provide a checklist/timeline of expectations beginning in the 11th grade for incoming students. ▪ Schedule time to visit local high schools to support FAFSA completion. ▪ Use regional recruitment staff to host FAFSA support sessions within local communities. ▪ Assess need for virtual events. ▪ Adopt a senior exit/graduation checklist inclusive of FAFSA completion for incoming students. ▪ Adopt a checklist for returning students to complete prior to summer break. ▪ Provide the “why” for postsecondary education. ▪ Explain the “why” for the FAFSA for current students. ▪ Create in-class time for FSA ID creation and FAFSA completion efforts.
<i>Maximize partnerships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How can we engage with our higher ed partners to support FAFSA completion efforts? ▪ Who in the community works closely with your students? ▪ What leaders have a good rapport with students who you can leverage support from? ▪ Are there community organizations you can leverage for additional support and/or capacity building? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Connect with Local College Access Networks (LCANs), Community Ambassadors, or community organizations. ▪ Engage with the library, YMCA, etc. ▪ Connect with higher ed regional reps to support. ▪ Engage parents of alumni and alumni to support. ▪ Host college registration days onsite to complete FAFSA and finalize the registration process. ▪ Co-create summer melt program. ▪ Educate admissions, financial services, and student success professionals on new FAFSA requirements.

MUST DO	MAY DO (Choose 3-5 priority actions from above and list here)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Name a FAFSA Champion (Lead) and FAFSA Team. ▪ Establish a meeting cadence for all team members. ▪ Monitor data regularly through MiSSG Portal and Michigan FAFSA Tracker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪

CREATING A CALENDAR (HIGH LEVEL)

In the table below, from your must-do and may-do priority actions listed above, add what will be completed for the next 12 months for each of the correlating FAFSA completion strategy areas. Note: you may not need an action in each area every month. **Your team meeting agendas should include the items listed below.**

Strategy Areas	Set a bold goal and monitor progress	Spread awareness and provide individualized support	Expand capacity and dedicated support	Establish college-going culture	Maximize Partnerships
<i>September</i> FSA ID open					
<i>October</i> College Application Month					
<i>November</i>					
<i>December</i> Anticipated FAFSA release					

January College Cash Campaign					
February College Cash Campaign					
March College Cash Campaign target for goal #1					
April College Cash Campaign					
May Decision Day					
June Target for goal #2					
July					
August					

WORKING PLANS

This is designed to actualize the execution of the priority actions that you chose above (may do). This helps you better plan what will need to be done to ensure that there is follow-through.

Build out a working plan for the priority action steps that you indicated in the “may do” list above. You should have at least three priority action working plans.

Priority Action 1 (may do):

<i>What tasks will have to be done to successfully complete this priority action?</i>	<i>Who?</i>	<i>By when?</i>	<i>Resources (\$\$) or learning needed</i>

Priority Action 2 (may do):

<i>What tasks will have to be done to successfully complete this priority action?</i>	<i>Who?</i>	<i>By when?</i>	<i>Resources (\$\$) or learning needed</i>

Priority Action 3 (may do):

<i>What tasks will have to be done to successfully complete this priority action?</i>	<i>Who?</i>	<i>By when?</i>	<i>Resources (\$\$) or learning needed</i>

Priority Action 4 (may do):

<i>What tasks will have to be done to successfully complete this priority action?</i>	<i>Who?</i>	<i>By when?</i>	<i>Resources (\$\$) or learning needed</i>